

Media Advisory

National Weather Service, Des Moines, IA

March 12, 2010

This spring, the National Weather Service in Des Moines will have a new policy concerning short-term weather and impact information. This new policy will officially go into effect on March 15, 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Jeff Johnson at the National Weather Service at 515-270-4501, E726. Thank you.

New Special Weather Statement Policy: The old short term forecast will be replaced by special weather statements. Here are the details of the change:

Special Weather Statements are used to convey short-term weather and impact information of importance to our customers that (1) is insufficient to justify issuance of a warning or advisory or (2) provides information in the convective pre-warning mode. Essentially this product serves the function of the old short-term forecast (NOW) with two important differences: (1) it is much more widely disseminated and receives more attention than the NOW, and (2) the threshold for SPS issuance is higher than the NOW, thus only information of significance is passed on to the user.

The Special Weather Statement is a short-fused product (~1-4 hours) and is not a replacement for the Hazardous Weather Outlook (HWO). Where the HWO focuses on more general outlook conditions for the next 7 days, the SPS should focus on detailed forecast information for the next ~1-4 hours. The SPS will either deal with specific storms and the immediate downstream impact, or over a larger area concerning thunderstorm trends and potential impacts.

The Special Weather Statement WMO code is: **WWUS84 KDMX**

After one year, we decided to discontinue the Significant Weather Advisory. The information will be contained in a very similar format under the Special Weather Statement.

The Special Weather Statement shall be issued:

Thunderstorms

- Use as a pre-warning tool to provide a heads-up of impending severe weather, e.g., counties downstream of severe thunderstorms not yet in a warning.
- Hail less than warning criteria, e.g., ½ inch- 7/8 inch
- Wind less than warning criteria, ~40-57mph
- Lightning of unusually great intensity or any thunderstorm forecast to hit a significantly exposed population (e.g., college football game).
- A favorable landspout environment.

Winter Weather

- Precipitation events (snow or ice) sufficient to impact travel but below advisory/warning criteria.
- Blowing/drifting snow sufficient to cause a travel hazard but below advisory/warning criteria.
- Wind chills near but not in criteria early or late in the season (~-10 to -20°F).

Other

- Heat indices only briefly in criteria in time and/or space (<3hrs, scattered coverage), or near but not in criteria.
- Dense fog (or smoke or haze) not sufficiently widespread and/or long-lasting enough to justify an advisory (<3hrs, scattered coverage).